

Palestine
(89)
(R)

TOP SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE SECRETARY

May 25, 1948

Mr. Secretary:

M. Lovett wanted to make sure that you had seen the attached papers. As you know, the Policy Planning Staff has been recording its deep apprehensions over the Palestine policy for about the last six or eight months.

MSC
I read this and agree with Lovett. Well

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
REVIEWED BY <i>WOLF JR</i>	DATE <i>5/25/82</i>
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE _____	
TS AUTH _____	REASON(S) _____
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐	
DECLASSIFIED ☒ RELEASABLE ☒	
REFRASE DENIED ☐	
PA or FOR EXEMPTIONS _____	

TOP SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Palestine
TOP SECRET

THE UNDER SECRETARY

May 21, 1948

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

I forward the attached memorandum on the subject of Palestine from the Policy Planning Staff with concurrence in their recommendation that the course which this Government embarks upon should be cleared with the National Security Council after careful consideration. (You will recall, in this connection, that you presented the memorandum outlining the course of action now being followed in the Security Council to the President when you were accompanied by Mr. Rusk, and that the President approved the procedures being followed.)

I am unable, however, to join the Policy Planning Staff in the views expressed in their January 19 and January 29 papers on this subject insofar as they state that "this Government should not take any action which would bring us into a conflict with the British over the Palestine issue". I would gladly agree if the policy were to join the British when they are right and oppose them when they are wrong. I cannot believe that the United States should give the British an implied warrant to take any course of action they may choose, however irresponsible, provocative, or unjust. I feel that this Government should endeavor to cooperate fully and loyally with the British and that it should try to reach agreement on a parallel course of action wherever possible, but I think that it is of at least equal importance that this Government pursue a course which it feels to be just and in keeping with the obligations we have undertaken as a member of the United Nations. If this brings us into conflict with the British, I think we should face up to this fact and not join them in actions we feel to be improper merely to avoid the conflict.

I agree fully with the Policy Planning Staff that major responsibility for the maintenance and security of a Jewish state in Palestine should not be assumed by this Government. It is my understanding that the present policy of this country is to act only as a member of the

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

-2-

United Nations and, as such a member, to undertake only its pro rata share of any obligation accepted by the United Nations, and then only if other countries do likewise.

It is hard for me to follow a line of reasoning which suggests, by implication at least, that "a process of disintegration in the United Nations" is initiated by the United Nations carrying out its primary functions--to maintain international peace and security. It would seem to me to be equally logical to suggest that, if the United Nations does not exercise its appropriate functions in the preservation of international peace and security, it seals its own doom.

Robert A. Lovett

Copy to Mr. Kennan.

U:RAL:GES

TOP SECRET

Marshall chit:
I read this and agree
with fourth. n.c.m.

S/P - Mr. Kennan
Palestine

TOP SECRET

May 21, 1948

(Lynch memo.)

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

I forward the attached memorandum on the subject of Palestine from the Policy Planning Staff with concurrence in their recommendation that the course which this Government embarks upon should be cleared with the National Security Council after careful consideration. (You will recall, in this connection, that you presented the memorandum outlining the course of action now being followed in the Security Council to the President when you were accompanied by Mr. Rusk, and that the President approved the procedures being followed.)

I am unable, however, to join the Policy Planning Staff in the views expressed in their January 19 and January 29 papers on this subject insofar as they state that "this Government should not take any action which would bring us into a conflict with the British over the Palestine issue". I would gladly agree if the policy were to join the British when they are right and oppose them when they are wrong. I cannot believe that the United States should give the British an implied warrant to take any course of action they may choose, however irresponsible, provocative, or unjust. I feel that this Government should endeavor to cooperate fully and loyally with the British and that it should try to reach agreement on a parallel course of action wherever possible, but I think that it is of at least equal importance that this Government pursue a course which it feels to be just and in keeping with the obligations we have undertaken as a member of the United Nations. If this brings us into conflict with the British, I think we should face up to this fact and not join them in actions we feel to be improper merely to avoid the conflict.

I agree fully with the Policy Planning Staff that major responsibility for the maintenance and security of a Jewish state in Palestine should not be assumed by this Government. It is my understanding that the present policy of this country is to act only as a member of the

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

-2-

United Nations and, as such a member, to undertake only its pro rata share of any obligation accepted by the United Nations, and then only if other countries do likewise.

It is hard for me to follow a line of reasoning which suggests, by implication at least, that "a process of disintegration in the United Nations" is initiated by the United Nations carrying out its primary functions--to maintain international peace and security. It would seem to me to be equally logical to suggest that, if the United Nations does not exercise its appropriate functions in the preservation of international peace and security, it seals its own doom.

Robert A. Lovett

Copy to Mr. Kennan.

U:RAL:GES

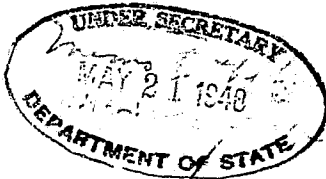
TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE UNDER SECRETARY

S/P



May 21, 1948

U - Mr. Lovett

S - Mr. Secretary

The Policy Planning Staff, while fully cognizant of the limitations on formulation of policy in the Department on the Palestine matter, wishes to record once more its deep apprehensions over the trend of U.S. policy.

The Staff paper No. 19 of January 19, 1948 and the supplement of January 29 made clear the view of the Staff that this Government should not take any action which would:

(a) lead us to the assumption of major responsibility for the maintenance and security of a Jewish state in Palestine; or

(b) bring us into a conflict with the British over the Palestine issue.

The second of these documents specifically warned, in section 4, against our acceptance of the thesis that armed interference in Palestine by the Arab states would constitute aggression, which this Government would be bound, as a member of the United Nations, to join in opposing.

The course of action we are now embarking on in the UN leads us in the direction of all of these situations. It thereby threatens not only to place in jeopardy some of our most vital national interests in the Middle East and the Mediterranean but also to disrupt the unity of the western world and to undermine our entire policy toward the Soviet Union. This is not to mention the possibility that it may initiate a process of disintegration in the United Nations itself.

The fact that we have not yet been able to obtain the support of a Security Council majority for the courses

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

-2-

we are advocating relieves us of none of our responsibility.

The Staff considers, therefore, that the problem of the wisdom of this course is a grave and crucial question of national security which should be decided only on the advice of the National Security Council and after the most careful and thorough deliberation.

George F. Kennan
George F. Kennan

TOP SECRET